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ABSTRACT

The Sun Coast Area Teacher Training (SCATT) Program at the University of South Florida is involved in an endeavor to attract and keep bright and talented teachers in the teaching profession. Its mission is to achieve academic excellence and to improve the quality of teacher candidates. SCATT was begun as a collaborative program of the University of South Florida (USF) College of Education and 15 counties in the USF service area and also supported by a special allocation from the Florida State Legislature. SCATT members are recruited from all majors in education. They enter the program, if they meet the entrance requirements, following acceptance into the College of Education (i.e., in their junior year). There are five main components of the SCATT program: (1) student programs; (2) SCATT clinical teacher training; (3) student steering committee; (4) faculty steering committee; and (5) job opportunity. In this paper, program implementation is discussed briefly, and a program evaluation is offered. Questions addressed in detail include: (1) Who participates?; (2) What do people say about the program?; (3) Do participants feel that what is learned is useful and relevant to teaching?; (4) How do top level administrators feel about the program?; and (5) Are the goals of the program compatible with those of the community? Three flow charts describing the SCATT program are appended. (JMK)

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SCATT - SunCoast Area Teacher Training: A Model for Pursuing Excellence in the Teaching Profession--Present and Future

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Background

Numerous teacher education institutions throughout the country are involved in the task of specifying, identifying and/or redefining minimal teaching competencies for preservice teacher certification and, in some cases, for graduation (Mendoza and Kossack, 1981-82). The term "minimal," which is used to describe an acceptable level of competence for admittance into the profession, is troublesome. For example, would a cancer patient who needs an operation be satisfied with a doctor who had "minimal" competence? Would a person with a legal problem be satisfied with a lawyer who had "minimal" competence? Are parents expected to be satisfied with having their children placed in classrooms with teachers who have demonstrated "minimal" competence?

On the positive side, competency requirements are an obvious attempt to set standards for entrance into the teaching profession. The minimal competency phenomenon is no accident. It is the r sult of the fact that schools of education are often being forced to select "potential educators from among the least academically talented populations applying for college admissions" (Weaver, 1979, p. 30).

Weaver (1979) investigated conditions related to teacher education that may have a very "disturbing effect" on the status of the profession. Two of Weaver's findings included: (a) a shift in student preferences away from the field of education,

and (b) a sharp decline in test scores of college bound students and enrolled freshmen who intended to study in education (p. 30). In other words, the average SAT Verbal and Math scores of college-bound high school seniors who planned to major in education were well below average for all college-bound seniors tested in 1976. Data obtained from the American College Testing Program show essentially the same thing. (Weaver, 1979, p. 30)

Another study reported in Newsweek magazine (February 1, 1982) focuses on the problems of one area of education--science. The Newsweek article reports that 42 percent of science teachers are found to be unqualified because a majority of the talented students are lured into industry, which offers salaries far above the salaries of teachers.

The realization that teacher education is in a dire situation, with respect to the quality of present and potential applicants, is consciously and/or unconsciously related to the highly prevalent minimal competency efforts. It seems reasonable to expect future teachers to be competent in the basics which they will be expected to teach. In fact, "it is simply a reasonable requirement that those who attempt to develop literacy in the young be themselves literate" (Weaver, 1979, p. 30). However, teacher education institutions have an obligation to the public to pursue commitment and excellence, as well as to insure "minimal" standards for entrance into the profession.

The effort of educators to do more than discuss the need for attracting talented students to the field of education is exhibited in a program developed at the University of South Florida

College of Education in Tampa. The program called SCATT (Sun Coast Area Teacher Training) is designed specifically to attract talented students into the teaching profession and to facilitate their development into dedicated, highly qualified teachers. Once accepted into the SCATT program, students are exposed to activities which extend above and beyond the traditional academic program.

SCATT was begun as a collaborative program with the University of South Florida College of Education and 15 counties in the USF service area and was also supported by a special allocation from the Florida State Legislature. Both the content of the program, which incorporates a variety of current issues and trends in education, and the process, which includes the means for implementation of the program, emphasize group morale and a positive "self-image" for evaluating teachers and the teaching profession. If it is appropriate for inservice staff development programs to emphasize positive image as a necessary component for success, then it also seems appropriate for preservice programs to consciously adopt this positive approach toward teaching and learning. For example, Rallis and Bucci (1981) propose that:

> A staff development program that people believe is relevant and instructive will be effective. Its effectiveness will in turn continue to support participants' belief in the program. Thus, teachers will continue to attend, involvement will increase, participants will have more skills or knowledge that they feel they have gained and are taking back to their classrooms. They will interact with others, they will feel better about themselves professionally, and probably feel better about their organization in school. (p. 22)

Based upon the above premise, a program for preservice training, which students believe is relevant and instructive, will be effective. Thus it is believed that teacher education students will continue to participate by involving themselves in educational activities outside of classroom assignments, and students will continue to want to gain knowledge designed to be helpful to their education and future teaching. The results of positive programming and attendance at activities will lead to interaction with other bright, dedicated, enthusiastic students, which in turn will encourage education students to feel good about themselves, their future profession, and their dedication to staying in education.

The studies of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and Brophy and Good (1972) about students and teachers indicate that teacher expectations affect student self-concept and performance. It follows that if teacher educators declare the desire to attract talented people to the teaching field, provide opportunities for special students to plan and attend <u>special</u> "professional"-type programming, and stress the positive aspects of teachers and the teaching profession, then talented students will live the self-fulfilling prophecy. They will develop strong "beliefs" about the profession and perhaps even toward continuation in the profession.

Program Goals

1. To attract and keep bright, talented students in the teaching profession and to facilitate their development into committed, highly competent teachers.

    1.1. To design programs that will encourage students to participate in experiences and activities, helpful to their education and future teaching practices, which extend above and beyond the traditional academic program.

    1.2. To provide students with challenging professional activities and experiences that will aid and encourage them to become highly competent teachers.

    1.3. To train able classroom teachers to improve and refine communication and effective teaching skills to enhance their ability to supervise program interns.

    1.4. To help prospective employers identify preservice teachers who have demonstrated academic achievement, ability, leadership and commitment to the profession.

2. To foster and maintain a positive attitude toward teaching and the teaching profession among program participants.

    2.1. To provide preservice teachers the opportunity to interact with other bright, enthusiastic, committed students and professionals in order to enhance their professional self-concept and help them develop and/or maintain a positive attitude toward teaching and the teaching profession.

    2.2. To provide a support network for preservice teachers that continually reaffirms their commitment and dedication to the teaching profession.

3. To foster commitment and appreciation of academic excellence in education.

4. To improve the public's image of educators and education.

Description

The SCATT program at the University of South Florida is involved in an "exciting" endeavor to attract and keep bright and talented teachers in the teaching profession. Its mission is to achieve academic excellence and to improve the quality of teacher candidates.

Entrance/exit requirements. SCATT members are recruited from all majors in education. They enter the program following acceptance into the College of Education (i.e., in their junior year).

Entrance requirements: In order to become a member, applicants must meet general university admission requirements and must have a combined score of 21 or above on the ACT or 1000 or above on the SAT Examination. Associate memberships are also granted to students with grade point averages of 3.5 or above and two or more recommendations from professors. A small group interview with a SCATT director, designed to orient the student to SCATT's purposes and goals, is also an entry requirement. Requirements for maintaining membership in SCATT include attendance at a designated percentage of activities each semester and all activities during full-time internship.

Exit requirements: A grade point average of 3.2 or above by the completion of internship, in addition to the attendance requirement, is necessary to be considered a SCATT graduate and receive the letter from the College identifying participants as a "SCATT Grad."

Program components. The five main components of the SCATT program include:

1. STUDENT PROGRAMS

CYCLE I takes place from entrance until the beginning of full-time internship. The focus in CYCLE I is for SCATT students to participate in a wide variety of opportunities which extend beyond the range of a traditional academic program. Opportunities include seminars and workshops on topics such as Meeting Resistances in the Classroom, Education and the Legislature, Interpersonal Communication, Stress Management, Computers in Education, Meeting the Needs of the Learning Disabled from a Medical Perspective, etc. Students also participate in field experiences which take them to educational settings reflecting all ages and types of programs within the university service area such as special education centers, museums, gifted center, nature's classroom, a neo-natal unit at a local hospital, etc. All of the activities during CYCLE I are designed to expand the students' pedagogical experiences and to give them a "psychic lift" about their professional choice.

CYCLE II takes place during the final semester of a student's senior year when SCATT interns are placed with highly qualified SCATT trained clinical teachers. SCATT interns also attend two weeks of intensive training sessions during the internship period designed to promote effective communication and teaching skills.

2. SCATT CLINICAL TEACHER TRAINING

This component focuses on the training of specially selected classroom teachers as clinical teachers to supervise SCATT students

during their internship experience. The content of the training program is based on a review of current research on teacher effectiveness and consultation skills for working with interns and beginning teachers.

3. STUDENT STEERING COMMITTEE

The Student Steering Committee consists of active regular members and interns who volunteer to meet regularly to plan and implement SCATT programs and newsletters.

4. FACULTY STEERING COMMITTEE

The Faculty Steering Committee consists of College faculty who are chosen to evaluate, recommend and update SCATT procedures, policies and substance.

5. JOB OPPORTUNITY

The job opportunity component provides students with an opportunity to gain additional teaching experiences with a superior teacher and provides the county with an opportunity to secure talented and committed teachers. If a SCATT student volunteers during his/her senior year to participate in assisting and observing a teacher during the opening two weeks and closing two weeks of the school year, as well as volunteers ten additional days, then upon graduation the volunteer will be given special consideration in securing a teaching position.

Implementation

The following outline delineates the major implementation steps (see Appendix) in the USF SCATT program.

1. STUDENT PROGRAMS

CYCLE I - Expanding Educational Perspectives

This cycle is implemented during the junior and senior years. Two types of activities are held each semester.

...Workshops and seminars which are designed to expand the students' pedagogical experiences.

...Field trips which expose the students to unique classrooms and varied cultural and educational settings.

CYCLE II - Relating Research to Classroom Practice

This cycle is implemented during the last semester of the senior year. During this semester SCATT students are placed in the schools with SCATT trained clinical teachers for a 15-week internship period. During the first and last weeks of this period, intensive SCATT seminars, relating to research-based professional practices, are offered.

2. CLINICAL TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOPS

...Workshops are held during the summer for specially selected classroom teachers. Training stresses developing and refining skills necessary to observe and confer with interns.

...Currently a pilot program is underway offering the intensive two-week training over an entire semester, with a class one night per week.

3. STUDENT STEERING COMMITTEE

This committee meets at the beginning of each semester to plan the activities for the current semester.

4. FACULTY STEERING COMMITTEE

This committee meets at the beginning of each semester to evaluate SCATT progress and set SCATT policy as needed.

5. JOB OPPORTUNITY

...SCATT students apply for job opportunity two semesters prior to internship.

...The job opportunity experience involves four phases. Job opportunity students will be in their schools the semester before internship.

Program Evaluation

Initial efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the SCATT program have centered around program enrollment, graduation records, and feedback from participants concerning program offerings. This feedback is obtained from responses to questionnaires administered on completion of each workshop or seminar. For the most part, the data collected in the first two years of the program's implementation have been qualitative in nature. Due to the novelty of the program, this type of data was considered to be the more useful and informative for planning and evaluation during the program's evolving stages.

In keeping with the suggestion of Rallis and Bucci (1981), the following questions will be addressed in an attempt to assess the program's effectiveness:

...Who participates?

...What do people say about the program?

...Do participants feel that what is learned is useful and relevant to teaching?

...How do top level administrators feel about the program?

...Are the goals of the program compatible with the community?

The data reported herein covers the period 1981 to 1983.

...Who participates?

Approximately 250 undergraduate students specializing in a wide range of areas in education and 264 clinically trained teachers have participated in the program. The number of student graduates of the program have increased from 48 in academic year 1981/82 to 108 during the current academic year 1983/84.

...What do people say about the program? Do participants feel that what is learned is useful and relevant to teaching?

Data obtained from program participants consistently indicate that an overwhelming majority rate the SCATT program and its offerings as being highly effective, beneficial and relevant to their professional growth and needs. More specific feedback from student and clinical teacher participants is given below.

Student Reaction

(a) Perceived effect on professional growth. About 90 percent of the student participants indicated that they perceived the knowledge and experiences gained through SCATT workshops and seminars as being considerably beneficial to their professional growth. A relatively large proportion of these respondents described these experiences as professionally enhancing, academically challenging, and contributing to an enhanced self-confidence.

(b) Perceived effect on classroom teaching performance. Approximately 88 percent of the questionnaire respondents reported that they felt their classroom teaching performance would be "improved considerably" or "a great deal" because of SCATT program offerings.

(c) Suitability to the professional needs of the intern or beginning teacher. On the average, approximately 85 percent of the program participants reported that SCATT program offerings were suitable to the professional needs of the intern or beginning teacher.

(d) Attitude toward teaching and the teaching profession. Although a formal attitude survey was not administered to

participants during the period under review, nonetheless general comments written by questionnaire respondents reflect that many students developed a more positive attitude toward teaching and the teaching profession as a result of their experiences in the SCATT program. In addition, a number of students consistently reported that they had developed more confidence in themselves as prospective teachers.

(e) Willingness to recommend program to other students. More than 90 percent of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they would recommend the SCATT program to other students.

(f) Program offerings rated as being most beneficial. Specific program offerings which were consistently rated as the most beneficial by students include:

Management of Classroom Conduct
School Law
Parent/Teacher Conferencing
The Florida Beginning Teacher Program (Domains)
Research on Effective Teaching Behaviors
Field Trips
BAFA - Multi-Cultural Simulation
Critical Times for Beginning Teachers
Job Placement and Interviewing
First Aid in the Classroom

Clinical Teachers Reactions

(a) Perceived effect on professional growth. One hundred percent (100%) of questionnaire respondents indicated that the

training they received in the SCATT Clinical Teacher Training program would help them in their professional growth either "considerably" or a "great deal."

(b) Perceived degree of preparedness for and effectiveness in working with interns. One hundred percent (100%) of program participants indicated that their SCATT training made them feel better prepared for working with interns. More specifically, they felt that this training would improve their effectiveness in working with interns.

(c) Suitability of seminars to supervising teachers' needs.[1] Approximately 75 percent of the participants reported that for the most part seminars were suitable to the needs of supervising teachers.

(d) Willingness to recommend program to colleagues. All but 2 of the 264 participants reported that they would recommend the SCATT training to their colleagues. Approximately 94 percent indicated that they would definitely recommend the SCATT program to colleagues. Approximately 6 percent indicated that they probably would recommend it or recommend it to specific colleagues only.

Program Offerings Reported as Most Effective or Beneficial

An overwhelming majority of the clinical teachers consistently rated the Consultation Skills training as being effective and most beneficial to them. On average, approximately 90 percent of the participants indicated that this training would improve

[1]Not included on the questionnaire administered at the 1981 seminars.

their skills and practice in their own classroom teaching and in consulting with the interns they supervise. Other program areas often cited as effective or beneficial were: Management of Student Conduct, Presentation of Instructional Content, and Critical Times for and Characteristics of Effective Beginning Teachers.

Comments about the SCATT Program from Other Sources

Supervising teachers in the schools who have worked with SCATT interns have consistently provided very positive feedback on the performance of their SCATT interns. Many report SCATT interns to sustain a high level of productivity, to be energetic, enthusiastic, committed, and knowledgeable in their content area, as well as very well prepared for classroom teaching.

...How do top level administrators feel about the program?

Top level administrators at the state, county and university level have consistently commended and supported the concept of SCATT and the SCATT program.

The Florida State Legislature has supported the SCATT program through legislation and funding.

...Are the goals of the program compatible with the community?

The public's demand for improvement and excellence in education is in strong accord with SCATT program goals. The community wholeheartedly supports attracting and keeping bright, talented students in the teaching profession. The SCATT program was ahead of its time in moving toward excellence in education rather than minimum levels of acceptance.

The next phase in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the SCATT program will include comparisons between SCATT members and non-members in the areas of (a) teaching performance and (b) attitude toward teaching and the teaching profession.

Follow-up studies of SCATT graduates will also be undertaken in these areas.

Guidelines for Planning and Implementing a SCATT Program

Successful SCATT programs can be started at other colleges and universities. The following factors need to be carefully considered to develop and implement an effective SCATT program.

(i) Consideration should be given to state, federal, college and private funding sources.

(ii) Selection of a competent program coordinator is vital to the success of the program.

(iii) Entrance requirements should be clearly defined.

(iv) Recruitment of new members needs to be a systematic and continuous process.

(v) Program goals should be developed to fit the unique situations on each campus.

(vi) Student involvement through the Steering Committee and attendance at functions should be required as part of membership.

(vii) SCATT graduate requirements should be developed to reflect successful program completion.

(viii) Workshops for training clinical teachers should be carefully planned and organized to maximize benefits to the teachers.

(ix) Contracts with counties should be developed and discussed with representatives from all participating counties.

(x) Publicity plays an important role in keeping the college and the community aware of the SCATT program.

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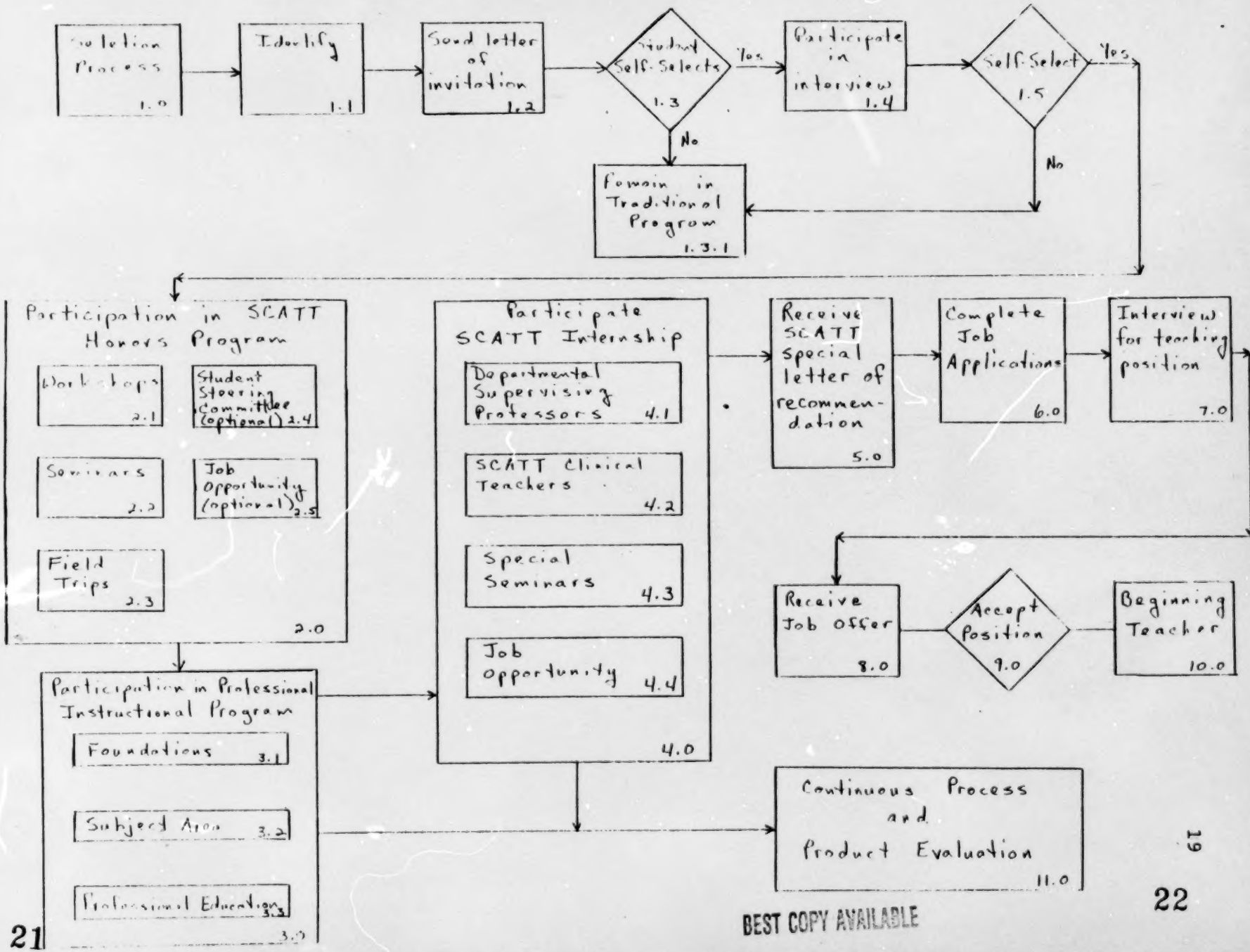
APPENDIX

SCATT PROGRAM



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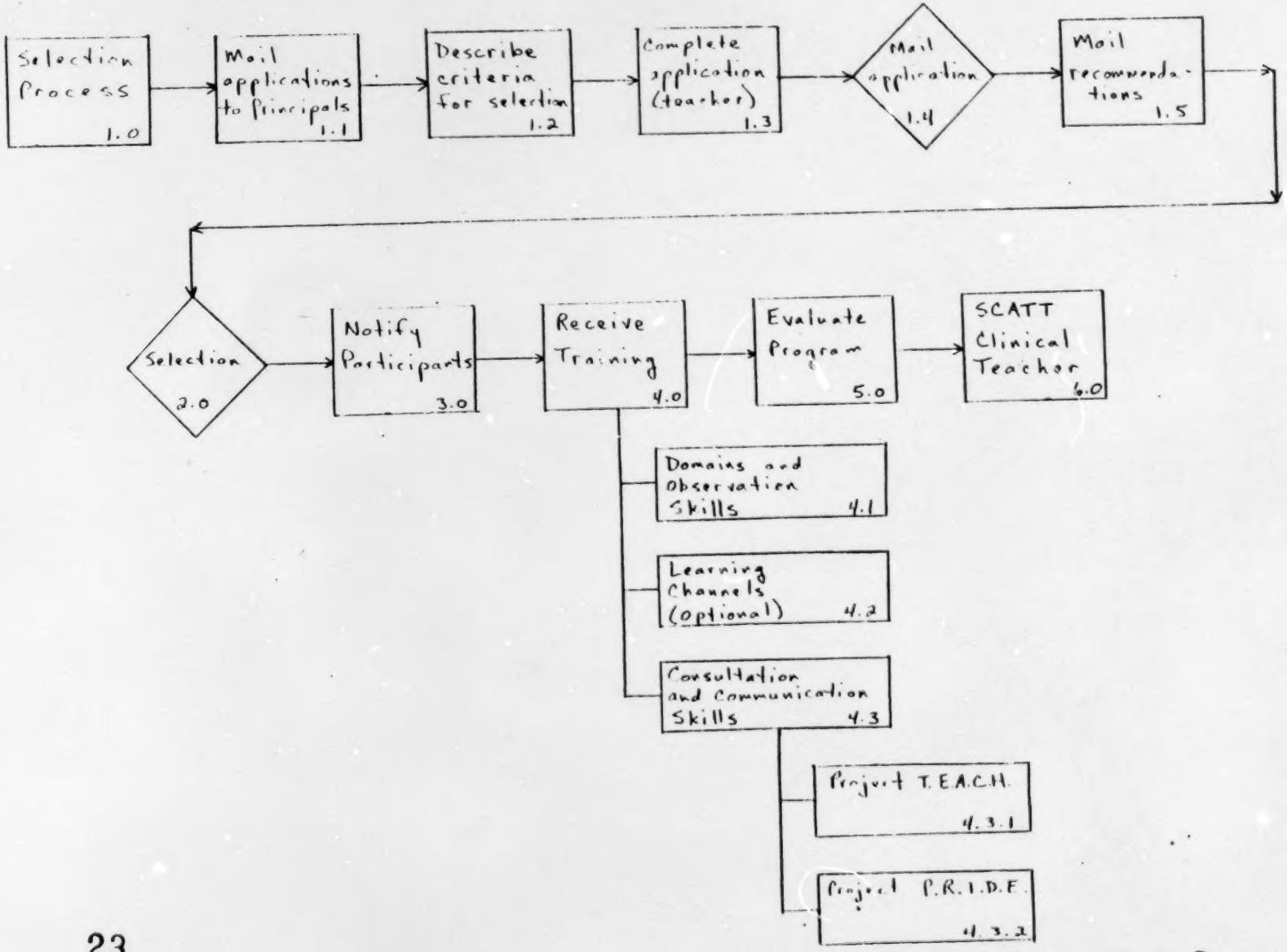
SCATT CLINICAL TEACHERS



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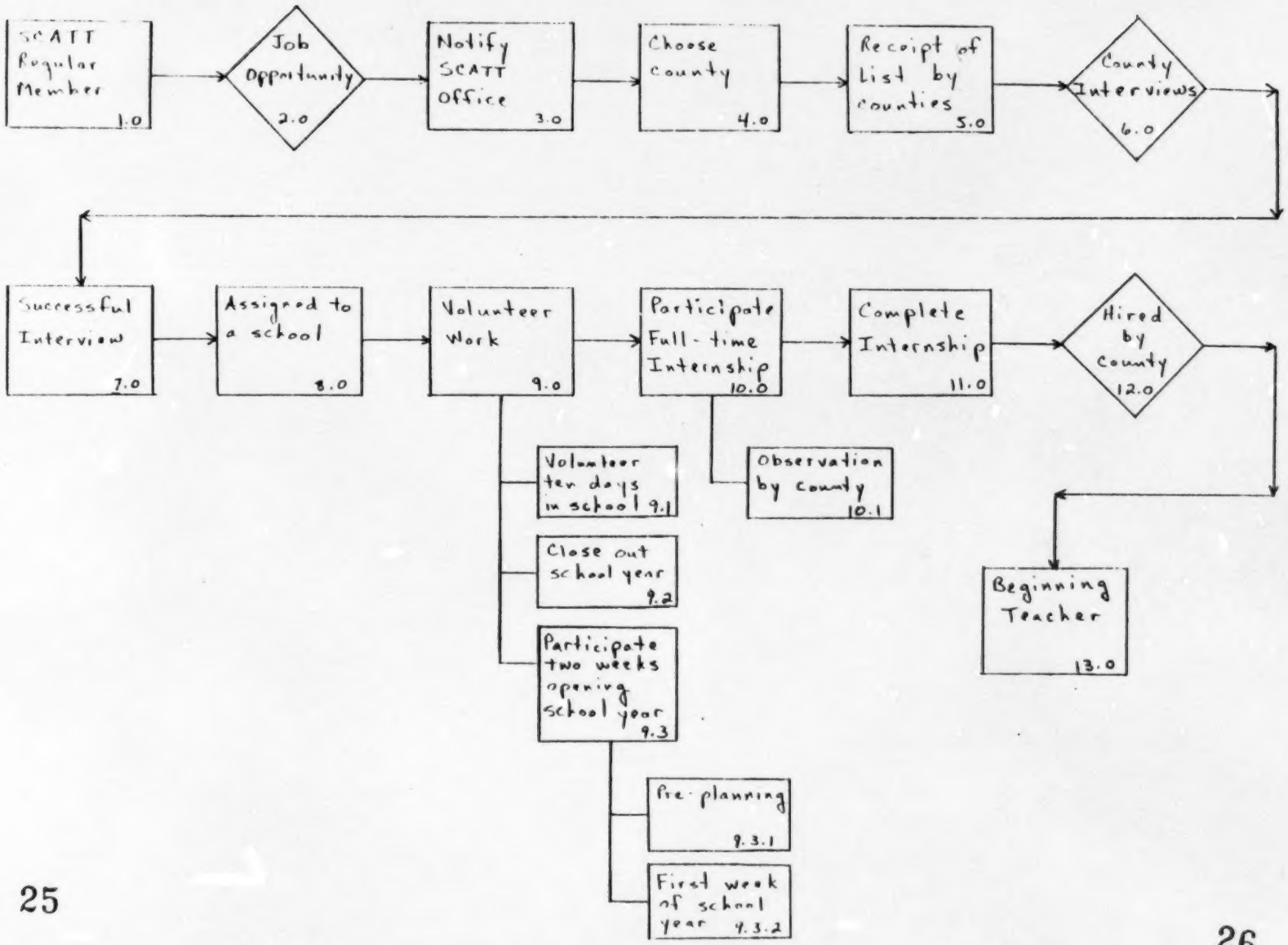
Job OPPORTUNITY


SCATT Regular Member 1.0
Job Opportunity 2.0
Notify SCATT Office 3.0
Choose county 4.0
Receipt of list by counties 5.0
County Interviews 6.0
Successful Interview 7.0
Assigned to a school 8.0
Volunteer Work 9.0
Participate Full-time Internship 10.0
Complete Internship 11.0
Hired by county 12.0
Volunteer ten days in school 9.1
Close out school year 9.2
Participate two weeks opening school year 9.3
Observation by county 10.1
Beginning Teacher 13.0
Pre-planning 9.3.1
First week of school year 9.3.2

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